
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	324 U Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	LeDroit Park Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	September 27, 2018	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	18-514	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, owner Eduardo Sardiña, seeks concept review for a new two-story carriage house behind the two-story rowhouse at 324 U Street NW, a contributing building in the LeDroit Park Historic District. Plans were prepared by Sardiña Design Associates.

Property Description and Context

324 U Street is part of a terrace of six rowhouses designed by N.T. Haller in 1890. Typical of Haller's prolific and idiosyncratic Victorian designs, this row is a symmetrical and tightly coordinated grouping. The rear elevations and wings of the row present an expected context of simple massings and modest utilitarian alterations to windows, decks and small bump-out additions. Six one-story garages estimated to date to 1910-1930 line the southside of this alley.

Proposal

The proposed new carriage house would be the full width of the lot (16 feet) and two stories tall with a flat roof 18 feet above grade. It would be setback from the rear property line two feet. The walls would be common bond brick on all four sides with a carriage door paired with a pedestrian door on the alley side. The alley elevation and yard elevation would both be fenestrated with three double-hung windows at the second floor. The rear yard is currently unimproved, so no demolition would be required to construct the proposed carriage house.

Evaluation

Simple, vernacular two-story carriage houses—like the one proposed for 324 U Street—are a common building type found throughout the 19th century historic districts of the city. The concept proposed matches the historic building type in every major principle by which new construction is evaluated by the Board for compatibility, most importantly in this case: orientation, scale, rhythm, height, material and roof shape.¹ The only consideration is whether this building type is appropriate to the pattern of development of this alley.

In the last ten years, with the population growth of the District of Columbia and sustainability trends towards increased density, there has been a steady increase in demand for new accessory structures. In response the Historic Preservation Office conducted a survey to analyze the number and characteristics of historic alley buildings and make recommendations how to best revitalize and utilize this built resource.²

¹ *New Construction in Historic Districts* (1997), Section 1.2.

² *The DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey* (2014)

The survey identified alley buildings in historic districts and analyzed them by type, date of construction and distribution. The survey identified two types of structures most associated with rowhouses. Carriage houses are typically two-stories, brick, with a carriage door paired with a pedestrian door and date to 1880-1910. The 1910s was a period of transition from horse-drawn transportation to motor vehicles. From 1920-1930 cars had eclipsed horses and alley buildings were almost exclusively garages with one-story, vernacular materials, and a single car door at the alley.

The survey identified 723 garages and 325 carriage houses across the historic districts surveyed.³ Specifically in LeDroit Park 17 garages and 14 carriage houses were found showing that LeDroit Park has an above average share of carriage houses compared to other historic districts.

324 U Street and the other rowhouses of the square (except for three built in 1913) date to 1890-1905, well within the era of horse-drawn transportation and carriage houses. The proposed carriage house fundamentally fits with the pattern and period of rowhouse development in this part of LeDroit Park and is compatible with the historic district.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the concept design for a new two-story carriage house at 324 U Street NW to be compatible with the character of the historic district, consistent with the purpose of the preservation act, and delegate final approval to staff.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer

³ The survey only looked at L'Enfant Plan historic districts plus Georgetown and LeDroit Park. Including later suburban historic districts like Mount Pleasant and Takoma Park in later surveys will certainly increase the proportion of garages to carriage houses across all the historic districts.